

SECTION III—REMARKS

This amendment is submitted in response to the Office Action mailed December 15, 2004. Claim 12 is amended to correct its dependency, and claims 1-19 remain pending in the application. Applicant respectfully requests allowance of all pending claims in view of the following remarks.

Rejections Under 35 U.S.C. § 103

The Examiner rejected all claims in the application under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as obvious in view of, and therefore unpatentable over, various combinations of the following references: U.S. Patent No. 6,226,618 to Downs *et al.* (“Downs”), U.S. Patent No. 6,512,837 to Ahmed (“Ahmed”) and U.S. Patent No. 6,324,573 to Rhoads *et al.* (“Rhoads”). Specifically, the Examiner rejected claims 1-4 and 8-17 as unpatentable over Downs in view of Ahmed and rejected claims 5-7 and 18-19 as unpatentable over Downs in view of Ahmed and further in view of Rhoads.

Applicant respectfully traverses the Examiner’s rejections. To establish a *prima facie* case of obviousness, three criteria must be met: (1) the prior art references must teach or suggest all the claim limitations; (2) some suggestion or motivation to combine the references must be found in the prior art; and (3) there must be a reasonable expectation of success. MPEP § 2143. As explained below, Applicant respectfully submits that the Examiner has not established a *prima facie* case of obviousness.

Claim 1 recites a system combination including “a content server connected to a network, said content server capable of delivering content over said network, said content containing a digital watermark” and “at least one monitor station to receive said content over said network and analyzing said digital watermark for information indicative of degradation of said content.” The Examiner concedes that Downs does not disclose a combination including “at least one monitor station to receive said content over said network and analyzing said digital watermark for information indicative of degradation of said content.” The Examiner, however, contends that Ahmed discloses this feature and concludes that it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to combine Downs and Ahmed to arrive at the claimed invention.

Applicant respectfully disagrees. Ahmed discloses what is essentially a three-step process for detecting and characterizing signal alteration. First, an item of content is analyzed to determine a set of signal metrics, and these signal metrics are encoded in a watermark and embedded in the content (col. 2, lines 23-31). Next, after the content undergoes some process that may result in alteration, the content is re-analyzed to determine a new set of signal metrics (col. 3, lines 42-45). Finally, the metrics embedded in the watermark are extracted (col. 3, lines 61-62) and compared to the metrics computed during the analysis of the possibly altered content (col. 3, line 63 - col. 4, line 2) to determine whether there has, in fact, been any alteration. Thus, Ahmed *re-analyzes the content* to determine signal degradation, but does not *analyze the watermark*. Instead, Ahmed uses the watermark only as a way to carry the original signal metrics, so that they can later be compared to the metrics computed after possible alteration of the content. Thus, Ahmed cannot disclose, teach or suggest “at least one monitor station to receive said content over said network and analyzing said digital watermark for information indicative of degradation of said content.” For the reasons above, Applicant respectfully submits that Downs and Ahmed, when combined, cannot obviate claim 1 and respectfully requests withdrawal of the rejection.

Regarding claims 2-7 if an independent claim is allowable, then any claim depending therefrom is also allowable. *See, e.g., MPEP § 2143.03; In re Fine, 837 F.2d 1071 (Fed. Cir. 1988).* As discussed above, claim 1 is in condition for allowance. Applicant respectfully submits that claims 2-4 are therefore allowable by virtue of their dependence on an allowable independent claim, as well as by virtue of the features recited in the claims. Applicant therefore respectfully requests withdrawal of the rejections and allowance of these claims.

Claim 8 recites a method combination including integrating a digital watermark into content, distributing said content over a network as distributed content, receiving said distributed content in at least one location of said network and “analyzing said digital watermark of said distributed content for information indicative of the quality of said distributed content.” By analogy to the discussion above for claim 1, Downs and Ahmed, when combined, cannot obviate the claim because the references do not disclose all the

elements of a method combination including “analyzing said digital watermark of said distributed content for information indicative of the quality of said distributed content.” Applicant submits that Downs and Ahmed therefore cannot obviate claim 8 and respectfully requests withdrawal of the rejection and allowance of the claim.

Regarding claims 9-10 if an independent claim is allowable, then any claim depending therefrom is also allowable. *See, e.g.*, MPEP § 2143.03; *In re Fine*, 837 F.2d 1071 (Fed. Cir. 1988). As discussed above, claim 8 is in condition for allowance. Applicant respectfully submits that claims 9-10 are therefore allowable by virtue of their dependence on an allowable independent claim, as well as by virtue of the features recited in the claims. Applicant therefore respectfully requests withdrawal of the rejections and allowance of these claims.

Claim 11 recites a machine-readable medium containing instructions which, when executed, effect the following: integrating a digital watermark into content, distributing said content over a network as distributed content, receiving said distributed content in at least one location of said network and “analyzing said digital watermark of said distributed content for information indicative of the quality of said distributed content.” By analogy to the discussion above for claim 1, Downs and Ahmed, when combined, cannot obviate the claim because the references do not disclose all the elements of a machine-readable medium combination including instructions for “analyzing said digital watermark of said distributed content for information indicative of the quality of said distributed content.” Applicant submits that Downs and Ahmed therefore cannot obviate claim 11 and respectfully requests withdrawal of the rejection and allowance of the claim.

Regarding claims 12-13 if an independent claim is allowable, then any claim depending therefrom is also allowable. *See, e.g.*, MPEP § 2143.03; *In re Fine*, 837 F.2d 1071 (Fed. Cir. 1988). As discussed above, claim 11 is in condition for allowance. Applicant respectfully submits that claims 12-13 are therefore allowable by virtue of their dependence on an allowable independent claim, as well as by virtue of the features recited in the claims. Applicant therefore respectfully requests withdrawal of the rejections and allowance of these claims.

Claim 14 recites a system including means to serve content that is connected to a network, said means to serve content capable of delivering content over said network, said content containing a digital watermark, and “means for monitoring to receive said content over said network and analyzing said digital watermark for information indicative of degradation of said content.” By analogy to the discussion above for claim 1, Downs and Ahmed, when combined, cannot obviate the claim because the references do not disclose all the elements of a system combination including “means for monitoring to receive said content over said network and analyzing said digital watermark for information indicative of degradation of said content.” Applicant submits that Downs and Ahmed therefore cannot obviate claim 14 and respectfully requests withdrawal of the rejection and allowance of the claim.

Regarding claims 15-17 if an independent claim is allowable, then any claim depending therefrom is also allowable. *See, e.g.*, MPEP § 2143.03; *In re Fine*, 837 F.2d 1071 (Fed. Cir. 1988). As discussed above, claim 14 is in condition for allowance. Applicant respectfully submits that claims 15-17 are therefore allowable by virtue of their dependence on an allowable independent claim, as well as by virtue of the features recited in the claims. Applicant therefore respectfully requests withdrawal of the rejections and allowance of these claims.

Conclusion

Given the above remarks, Applicant believes all claims pending in the application are in condition for allowance. If the undersigned attorney has overlooked a teaching in any of the cited references that is relevant to allowance of the claims, the Examiner is requested to specifically point out where such teaching may be found. Further, if there are any informalities or questions that can be addressed via telephone, the Examiner is encouraged to contact the undersigned attorney at (206) 292-8600.

Charge Deposit Account

Please charge our Deposit Account No. 02-2666 for any additional fee(s) that may be due in this matter, and please credit the same deposit account for any overpayment.

Respectfully submitted,

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Date: 2-14-05

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